

Dear friends,

It is with some sadness and regret, but also with some peace in knowing that this is the right decision, that I am letting you know that worship services at Epiphany will be cancelled until further notice as we wait to see how the coming weeks of this current crisis unfold.

Last night your council met together to talk about what our options might be, and we agreed that this is the best course of action for us now. This was a painful decision to make, and we realize that it will be difficult news for some of you to hear. As we deliberated, two things became clear to us. First, this is the best way for us to care for each other here at Epiphany. Our call as the Body of Christ is to love one another and to support one another, especially those who are most vulnerable, and this action will be one important step in ensuring that we help one another to stay healthy and well. Second, we recognize that our call to love and to care extends beyond the church and into this city that we call home. As people in all walks of life and all parts of our county – and our world – are being asked to limit contact with one another to slow the spread of this virus, our small act of suspending worship is one way of joining all of our neighbours in this effort to care for one another and to ensure the safety and well-being of all in our midst.

Although we will not be meeting together in person in the near future, we are going to ensure that we have opportunity to meet together in other ways. On Sunday mornings at the usual time of 10:00 there will online worship for us to join. This is all happening quickly, so we do not have all the details in place yet, but in the next few days you will be hearing more about how this worship will happen. Beginning next week Pastor Val and I will be offering a brief reflective service of morning prayer at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This will be online as well, and we'll try to make it as easy and accessible as possible, even for the least "techy" of us. Again, more details will be on the way soon. I will also try to keep you informed about similar opportunities being provided by our sister congregations close by and far away.

Finally, remember that we are not alone in this. Soon after our meeting ended last night I received word from our ELCIC bishops that all ELCIC congregations across the country are being asked to take the same action that we have decided upon. If this is a difficult decision, we know that all of our sisters and brothers in our church and others are facing the same difficult decision. But if this is a way of us to be in faithful ministry in our community, we know that we are joining together with all of our sisters and brothers in the Body of Christ who are carrying out this ministry as well.

The grace and peace of Christ, who makes us one, be with you today and throughout all of the coming days.

Pastor Paul